

# MISSOURI CONSERVATION *Employee* SHOWCASE

## Louise A. “Skip” Mourglia Soil Conservationist (Forestry), Republic



Louise A. “Skip” Mourglia ran a forest consulting business for 20 years before joining NRCS as a soil conservationist (forestry) in 2002. She says this career change gave her new tools to help people help the land. She works out of the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development office, and has the opportunity to work with NRCS employees and landowners in several counties.

“I’m very impressed with the high-quality people I work with in NRCS. I am proud of my agency for placing a high priority on competence, ethical standards, and professional conduct.”

Mourglia is a forester by trade, but she often finds herself in the role of a teacher.

“There is such a difference between understanding how a forest works versus how a pasture works or a crop field works,” she says. “If people don’t understand something, they are less likely to invest time and effort in its care. So education is a necessary part of getting them to take care of their forests.”

Mourglia is proud of the way she has seen her enthusiasm for her job and for forests rub off on landowners. By combining technical expertise and the knowledge of various cost-share programs, she encourages landowners to become active forest caretakers.

The Missouri Conservation Federation’s Forest Conservationist of the Year in 2002, Mourglia says she is proud of the times she has used problems to introduce landowners to opportunities. A 2007 ice storm and tornadoes in 2003 created opportunities to plant new trees. Understanding that farmers had little time to baby trees, Mourglia designed a fast-growing, low-maintenance windbreak. Two of these windbreaks were established in 2004 as demonstrations, and the trees have grown nine feet tall in less than four years. More of these container-tree windbreaks are being installed each year through the EQIP program.

“When a farmer is impressed by his own efforts, he will show his neighbors. That’s how the fever spreads,” says Mourglia. “I like my job because I feel like I am making a difference.”